

Witnesses overlooked in JFK probe

By EARL COLE

Most witnesses who may have seen someone other than Lee Harvey Oswald in the swayed assembly window in 1963 were either overlooked or intimidated by Warren Commission investigators.

Johnny L. Powell, an inmate in the county jail at the time of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, recently told The Dallas Morning News he and others in his cell watched two men with a rifle in the 4th-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository across the street. When he looked

the men were "holding with" a scope on the rifle, Powell said.

Powell's sighting of the two men occurred at about the same time another photographer, Charles L. Branson, was taking what seemed to be two sporting images in the same window. This was about 12:34 p.m., or at least soon before the shooting.

POWELL AND his fellow inmates weren't questioned by authorities, although one of Jack Ruby's attorneys later mentioned to a Warren Commission investigator that the prisoner

had a good view of what took place. It might be helpful to the commission to know that there were people in jail who saw the actual killing.

Attorney Stanley M. Kaufman made the suggestion to Lane D. Baker, assistant counsel for the Warren Commission, when Kaufman's deposition was taken three months before the assassination investigation was completed in September 1964.

"I remember that that did occur and he got questioned as to the time as to why — if they were trying to find out all these facts — why they didn't go up [there and with all these prisoners]," Kaufman told The News recently.

On the day of the assassination, Kaufman was representing a church and inmate, Willie Mitchell. His client "described to me exactly" what happened when the shots were fired, Kaufman told The News, recalling "a male man (Mitchell) sick and everybody else sick up there."

Charles Powell Mitchell said he "didn't see anyone in that window" in the depository. Kaufman said because he is black, Mitchell probably was on the 8th floor of the three-segregated county jail, which faces Elmwood Street and Dealey Plaza.

POWELL WAS in a 4th-floor cell case-corridor in the 4th-floor central window of the depository where the Warren Commission placed Oswald at the time of the assassination.

"Quite a few of us saw them [two men in the depository window]," Powell said. "Everybody was trying to watch the parade and all that. We were looking across the street because it was directly straight across. The first thing I thought in it was security guards — I remember the cops."

Powell, then 37 and in jail for three days on charges of vagrancy and disturbing the peace, said "maybe more than half" of an estimated 40 inmates in his cell were trying to look from the window.

The two men in the window across the street "looked darker" than whites "were wearing" kind of brownish "a or darker clothes — like work clothes," Powell said.

As the shooting started Powell "went down, and then we kind of moved. And I [depository] was crying then."

"I felt very sick people."

"One of them had dark hair — a darker complexion than the other," Mrs. Henderson said. "I don't recall the experience of the other man caused him. You could see their heads and shoulders, but not like they were leaning in."

She said she saw no gun, but "they weren't close enough to the window to be able to know if they were holding anything."

Reading a few feet from Mrs. Henderson was Mrs. Carolyn Walker, a fellow worker at a dress factory across the street from the book depository.

Mrs. Walker looked up at about the same time and also saw two men in an upper-floor window of the depository. One was holding a gun, she said. The other man was wearing a dark brown suit and the other man had on a light-colored shirt or jacket, she said.

Later the FBI tried to make her think what it saw were books, Mrs. Walker said.

"They were going to get out to prove me a liar and I had no intention of arguing with them and being harassed," she said. "I felt like I had told them all I knew."

Another witness, Arnold Rowland, said he saw a man in a 4th-floor window of the depository holding a rifle across his chest at 12:33 p.m. or about an minute before the shooting. By the window, and the shooting of Branson's film. From his position along Houston Street above a half-block east of the depository, Rowland said he saw a second man, a black, in another window on the 4th floor — the floor from where Oswald was supposed to have shot the president.

ROWLAND STUCK to his story during a lengthy grilling by Warren Commission lawyers. Commission assistant counsel Baker, however, elicited from Rowland's wife that "no one my husband is prone to exaggerate" after he asked her whether "you can rely on everything that your husband says."

Rowland's story is also important because he saw the gunman in the 4th-floor window at 12:33 p.m., or minutes before a book depository employee said she saw Oswald in the 2nd-floor lunchroom.

Mrs. Carolyn Johnson of Rayburnville, Texas, told The News recently that she saw Oswald on the second floor as she was on her way out of the depository at about 12:32 p.m. to watch the motorcade. Five minutes later she was gone.

Mrs. Johnson said the police had read the FBI

Witnesses overlooked in JFK probe

By SARA GOLE

More witnesses who may have seen the assassination than Lee Harvey Oswald in the Oswald assassin's window in 1963 were either overlooked or mistaken by Warren Commission investigators.

Johnny L. Powell, an inmate in the city jail at the time of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, could not see the Dallas Morning News and others in his cell watched two men with a rifle in the 4th-floor window of the Texas School Depository Building across the street when he looked

the men were "looking into" the rifle, Powell said. Powell's sighting of the men occurred at about the same time as photographer Charles L. Smith was taking what seemed to be a morning image in the same window. This was about 12:30 p.m., he said, before the shooting.

POWELL AND his fellow weren't questioned by anyone, although one of Jack Ruby's attorneys later questioned a Warren Commission investigator that the

"and a good view of what took place in what he believed to be the commission to know that there were people in jail who saw the actual killing."

Attorney Stanley M. Kaufman made an attempt to call on John D. Hertz, Commission, when Kaufman's deposition was taken three months before the Warren Commission investigation was completed.

"I remember that that day and was a sort of concerned at that time as to all three facts — why they didn't go up there and talk to all these prisoners."

On the day of the assassination, Kaufman was representing a wealthy oil man, while Michael Heizer "described to me exactly" what happened when the shots were fired. Kaufman said Hertz, recalling "it made him (Michael) sick and everybody else sick as there."

Unlike Powell, Michael said he didn't see anyone in that window in the depository. Kaufman said, however, he thought Michael probably was on the 6th floor of the floor-depository on the 6th floor of the floor-depository and Deputy Police.

POWELL was in a 4th-floor cell on the corner of the depository where the Warren Commission placed Oswald at the time of the assassination.

"Quite a few of us saw them (two men) in the depository window," Powell said. "Everybody was trying to watch the parade and all that. We were looking across the street because it was directly straight across. The first thing I thought is, it was security guards. I remember the guys."

Powell, then 17 and in jail for three days on charges of vagrancy and disturbing the peace, said "maybe more than half" of an arrested at inmates in his cell were trying to look from the window.

The two men in the window across the street "looked darker than the white men were wearing 'kind of brownish looking or darker clothes. . . like work clothes," Powell said.

When the shooting started Powell was "looking down. And then we kind of looked around. And I (depository window) was empty then."

I didn't tell very many people

Powell said. "Most people don't believe it when you tell them anyway. . . I didn't want to get involved in it."

Powell was locked by the Warren Commission of President's file.

RAYMOND said he asked Michael to contact the Warren Commission but he had "this 'I don't want to get involved attitude."

Ronald R. Fletcher of Memphis was peering up from the street below at about the same time Powell was watching from the jail.

Fletcher recently told the News that David W. Belin, an assistant counsel for the Warren Commission, tried to "introduce" him into watching the men who he was able to see didn't have the light-colored shirt he believed he did have.

He (Belin) and I had a fight about it in the morning room over the color of the man's hair," Fletcher said. "He wanted me to tell him that the men were dark-skinned and I wouldn't do it."

Oswald's hair "doesn't appear to me in the photograph to be as light as the man's hair," Fletcher said, "and that's what Belin was upset about. I saw it, but I didn't see it at the time."

Fletcher said he didn't see a rifle or another person in the window but it was "extremely possible" from his point of view that he couldn't have seen another person.

The man he saw was wearing "some kind of a light-colored shirt, like maybe a T-shirt," and "all I could see through the open part of the window was from the middle of his chest up past the top of his head."

"I GADSDY at him a little bit because he seemed as frustrated in the way he was sitting," Fletcher said. "He was so into it. He was heavily concentrating on something or he was being sitting up."

Fletcher said the man "seemed tense. He was in the bright daylight" at a time when most people were looking the other way for the motorcycle.

Across the street from Fletcher and Belin, at the northwest corner of Elm and Houston near the base of the depository, Mrs. Ruby DeLoach also saw two men in the window.

"One of them had dark hair . . . a darker complexion than the other," Mrs. DeLoach said. "I don't recall the appearance of the other man except from the way they were leaning on."

She said she saw no gun, but "they weren't close enough to the window to be able to know if they were holding anything."

Heard a few feet from Mrs. DeLoach was Mrs. Carolyn Wadkins, a fellow worker at a dress factory who saw the men from the look depository.

Mrs. Wadkins looked up at about the same time and depository door was holding a gun, she said. The gun was in a light-colored shirt or jacket she said she saw were there."

Later the FBI "tried to make me think that what I had seen was a man and a woman. . . they were going to get out to prove me a liar and I had no intention of arguing with them and being harassed," she said. "I let it be told them all."

Another witness, Arnold Rowland, said he saw a man in a 4th-floor window of the depository holding a rifle across his chest at 12:15 p.m., or about 30 minutes before the shooting. He was seen by the shooting of the News from his position along Houston Street and a half-block east of the depository. Rowland said he saw a second man, a black, in another window on the 4th floor — the floor from where Oswald was supposed to have shot the president.

ROWLAND stuck to his story during a lengthy grilling by Warren Commission lawyers Commission assistant counsel Belin, however, admitted from Rowland's wife that "at times no husband is prone to exaggerate" after he asked her whether "you can rely on everything that your husband says."

Rowland's story is also important because he saw the gunman in the 4th-floor window at 12:15 p.m., or about 30 minutes before a look depository employee said the man Oswald in the 2nd-floor lunchroom.

Mrs. Carolyn Johnson of Memphis, Tenn., told the News recently that she saw Oswald in the second floor at a time when he was out of the depository at about 12:27 p.m. to watch the motorcycle. Five minutes later the shoot rang out.

Mrs. Johnson said she never had read the FBI report of two interviews with her, but she was surprised to learn they didn't mention of her sighting Oswald in the lunchroom.